United Nations

Daily Highlights

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Two French soldiers killed and three others wounded by Bosnian Government forces in attack on UNPROFOR convoy at Sarajevo airport yesterday; Secretary-General deplores incident and extends his condolences to French Government and victims' families; Security Council to discuss situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina at meeting tonight.

+ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees urges all parties in Yugoslavia to ensure safe passage for United Nations relief workers.

+ Secretary-General deplores loss of life in Ciskei during demonstration on Monday, 7 September; advance party of United Nations observers to travel to South Africa on Friday, 11 September, to establish mission called for by Security Council.

+ Anti-apartheid Committee expresses grave concern over killings in Ciskei, South Africa.

+ Secretary-General, addressing DPI Conference for non-governmental groups, calls for new approach to regional conflicts.

+ Security Council approves further increase in number of personnel to serve with United Nations Operation in Somalia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today deplored the killing of two French soldiers and the wounding of three others in an attack by Bosnian Government forces on a convoy of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) as it was entering Sarajevo airport yesterday. The Secretary-General has extended his condolences to the French Government and to the families of the victims. A United Nations official said an investigation had been initiated to look into the circumstances of the incident and to draft a report.

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After consultations among Security Council members this afternoon, it was announced that the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina would be discussed in a formal meeting of the Council this evening.

According to a press release issued by UNPROFOR, yesterday's attack occurred when UNPROFOR's weekly convoy on its way from Belgrade to Sarajevo was attacked in full daylight by Bosnian Government forces as it entered Sarajevo airport. Both Presidential and Serb forces had been given full notification of the unarmed convoy's passage and timing. All its vehicles were clearly identifiable, with United Nations flags, markings and insignia.

The press release said the attack was the fourth in a recent series of deliberate attacks on UNPROFOR's personnel and vehicles during the past three weeks. All four attacks were deliberately perpetrated by Bosnian President forces, the statement said.

UNPROFOR Force Commander, General Satish Nambiar, wrote today to President Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding this most recent example of a deliberate attack on UNPROFOR's humanitarian presence by Presidential forces. He has called for the perpetrators, who must have been acting against orders, to be brought to immediate salutary justice.

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In a related development, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has urged all parties to the fighting in former Yugoslavia to respect the guarantees of safe passage and unimpeded access for humanitarian supplies that they signed in London less than two weeks ago.

In a statement issued on Sunday, 6 September, the High Commissioner, Sadako Ogata, said UNHCR was determined to ensure that the people who had been displaced by the terror and the warfare were not made to suffer even further.

The humanitarian airlift remained suspended for a third straight day Sunday as UNHCR officials awaited the results of the investigation into the crash Thursday of an Italian transport plane loaded with blankets. All four crew members engaged in the mercy mission were killed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said today that he deeply deplored the loss of life which occurred in Ciskei on Monday, during a demonstration organised by the African National Congress (ANC).

In a press release issued at Headquarters, the Secretary-General also announced that an advance party of United Nations observers would travel to South Africa on Friday, 11 September, to establish the 50-member mission called for by the Security Council last month.

The Secretary-General noted that he had been authorised to deploy United Nations observers in South Africa to assist in strenghtening the structures

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set up under the National Peace Accord in that country, in consultation with the relevant parties. In its resolution, the Council also invited international organizations such as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the Commonwealth and the European Community to consider deploying their own observers in South Africa in coordination with the United Nations.

The statement said the Chief of the United Nations Observer Mission to South Africa would be Angela King of Jamaica. The deputy chief of the mission, Ismat Steiner of Tanzania, would lead the advance part of thirteen observers, who would be assigned tc Durban and Johannesburg.

The mission's headquarters will be in Johannesburg.

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The Special Committee against Apartheid today deplored the incident in Ciskei saying it was "appalled by the brutal killing" of at least 24 peaceful demonstrators by Ciskei soldiers at Bisho on 7 September.

In a statement, the Committee said that "such senseless killing" at this crucial juncture in South Africa's transition process, could not fail to undermine all progress so far made. The killings also threatened to stall further the already precarious process towards a peacefully negotiated new, non-racial and democratic South Africa, the statement said.

The Special Committee called on the South African authorities to assume immediate control of the Ciskei military, and demanded that an urgent investigation be initiated, in order to identify and bring to justice those found responsible for this act of violence.

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The Secretary-General this morning called for a stronger role for regional associations in support of the United Nations and the Charter, saying they could make a contribution to international peace and security.

In his statement to the annual conference of the Department of Public Information (DPI) for non-governmental organizations, he said that with the end of the cold war, there was a tendency to believe that conflicts in various regions may no longer pose a threat to international peace and security. While it was true, he said, that the international community could not step into every instance of violence that erupted around the world, "some disputes compel our attention".

As examples of coorperation between regional organizations and the United Nations, the Secretary-General cited Cambodia, where the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was involved; the former Yugoslavia, where several European associations were active; and Somalia, where the United Nations worked with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the League of Arab States, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

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The three-day NGO conference has as its theme "Regional Conflicts: Threats to World Peace and Progress". This afternoon it held a discussion of the Secretary-General's report to the Security Council earlier this year, "An agenda for peace", on preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peace-keeping. That report, issued in response to a summit meeting of the Council in January, contained proposals for enhancing the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security.

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The Security Council has approved a further increase in the number of personnel to serve with the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM).

In a letter to the Secretary-General, Council President José Ayala Lasso (Ecuador) said Council Members agreed to the recommendation by the Secretary-General to establish three specialised units - estimated at up to 719 all ranks - to help provide the elaborate logistic, communications and medical support that would be needed.

The Secretary-General had asked the Council in a letter for urgent action on this further recommendation. He said logistic support arrangements were indispensable for the proper functioning of UNOSOM.

The Council approved on 28 August the Secretary-General's proposal to establish four zone headquarters in Somalia and to deploy four additional security units, each with a strength of up to 750 all ranks. He further recommended the establishment of the specialised support units that "an operation of this size and complexity would require".
Document: S/24531, S/24534

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